



V.J. ST. PIERRE, JR.
PARISH PRESIDENT

KIM MAROUSEK, AICP
PLANNING DIRECTOR

ST. CHARLES PARISH

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ZONING

14996 RIVER ROAD • P. O. BOX 302 • HAHNVILLE, LOUISIANA 70057

(985) 783-5060 • FAX (985) 783-6447

Website: www.stcharlesparish-la.gov



TO: V.J. St. Pierre, Jr., Parish President

FROM: Kim Marousek, AICP, Director of Planning & Zoning *SL FOR*

SUBJECT: 2010 Annual Report

In 2010, the St. Charles Parish Planning & Zoning Department (Department) continued its efforts in meeting the mission of *"balancing the public interest with individual needs in pursuing a quality living and working environment in St. Charles Parish through effective land use management."* The department saw a general reduction in the number of permits issued and the number of new residential lots created which was reflective of the impacts of the larger regional and national economic issues. The Department also facilitated a major 20 year planning effort: "St. Charles 2030: Bridge to the Future". Through a strong public involvement process, this plan will lay the foundation for future growth policies as shaped by the vision of the St. Charles Parish community.

Accompanying this memo is a copy of the 2010 Annual Report for the Department of Planning & Zoning. The report covers the following major functions of the Department:

- I. Land Use Planning
 - A. Code Revisions
 - B. Zoning District Changes
 - C. Subdivision Activity
- II. Permitting
 - A. Permits Issued
 - B. Variance Requests
- III. Code Enforcement Activity
- IV. Coastal Zone Management
- V. Other Projects

The Department is charged with regulating present and future land uses in the Parish. Duties and responsibilities are divided into the following sections:

Land Use Planning & Zoning: This sector has the responsibility of managing land use for commercial and residential development as well as continually reviewing the Parish's Subdivision and Zoning regulations and making necessary recommendations for amendments.

Permit Administration: This sector is responsible for reviewing applications and issuing construction and non-construction permits. Construction permits include requests for new construction, additions to existing structures, accessory structures, mobile homes, and swimming pools. Non-construction permits include requests for home occupations, taxi services, signs, change of use, and change of occupancy. The permitting section requires compliance with the state and local construction codes.

Code Enforcement Administration: This sector is charged with the enforcement of zoning code, grass ordinance, trash and debris ordinance and abatement of unsafe structures. This includes the identification of violations, response to complaints and permit inspection.

Coastal Zone Management: This sector is charged with the management of coastal and wetland activities and floodplain management. Duties include wetland permit review, wetland mitigation, project administration and wetland and floodplain code enforcement.

I. LAND USE PLANNING

As outlined in the Home Rule Charter the Department of Planning & Zoning is the regulatory agency responsible for all land use planning within St. Charles Parish. Departmental staff, the Planning & Zoning Commission, the Zoning Board of Adjustments and the Coastal Zone Advisory Committee in accordance with the Code of Ordinances, administers land use regulation.

A. 2010 Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulation Revisions: Land use regulations are continually evaluated to meet the needs of St. Charles Parish. In 2010, the following amendment to the Code of Ordinance was evaluated by the Department and approved by the St. Charles Parish Council:

- Ordinance 10-8-9: To amend the St. Charles Parish Subdivision Regulations Section II.C. 3. to require minor resubdivision plats to indicate the developer is responsible for costs associated with infrastructure required because of the resubdivision.
- Ordinance 10-10-7: To amend Chapter 4, Article 1, Section 4-10(a) Keeping of Animals not considered Pets in other than OL to provide clarity to the review process and to provide a decision-making procedure.

- Ordinance 10-7-13, (amended 10-10-2): To amend Chapter 6, Article 2, Section 6-15 Permit Fees to align with fees associated with new Building Code Plan Review and Inspection Process with South Central Regional Planning Commission. In most cases this resulted in reduced fees to the public.

B. 2010 Zoning District Changes: In addition to revising the text of the Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Ordinance, the Department also processes rezone requests which result in Zoning Map amendments. After Departmental review, these requests are forwarded to the Planning Commission for a recommendation. Afterwards, the case is forwarded to the Council for final vote to approve or deny. Rezoning cases are forwarded to the Council because rezoning is a change to the Zoning Map and thus is an amendment to the Ordinance. Amendments to the Ordinance can only be made if there is a majority Council vote. In 2010, the Department processed 17 requests for rezoning of property.

Year	Applications Submitted	P&Z Commission Decisions		Parish Council Decisions	
		Approved	Denied	Approved	Denied
10	17	7	8	7	7
09	23	14	5	12	6
08	10	3	6	4	1
07	23	11	9	16	2
06	20	15	5	15	1
05	27	17	7	15	5

One (1) case was withdrawn by the applicant before Commission consideration; one (1) was removed from consideration by the Commission. One (1) case forwarded to the Council was postponed indefinitely. One (1) case approved by the Commission in December 2010 was denied by the Council in January 2011 and is reflected in the table above.

C. 2010 Subdivision Activity: The Department is responsible for administering all residential and commercial land partitions within St. Charles Parish in accordance with the procedures and design standards of the Subdivision Ordinance.

Major Subdivisions: Major subdivisions are any resubdivision actions resulting in more than five (5) lots, and / or containing a proposed street, and / or requiring infrastructure improvements. If infrastructure is required, the action is processed through a formal process consisting of three major steps: Preliminary Plat, Construction Approval, and Final Approval/Dedication of Infrastructure. A developer requests approval of the conceptual design of a subdivision by submitting a Preliminary Plat showing street and lot layout. The Department analyzes the impacts the proposal might have on the surrounding community and infrastructure. When the conceptual design meets the design standards of the Subdivision Regulations, the Planning and Zoning Commission may approve the Preliminary Plat. In the event the concept cannot meet certain design standards, the developer may request a waiver from specific regulations. In this case, the Parish Council also must approve the Preliminary Plat in the form of a Supporting Resolution. Those subdivisions approved by the Commission

not requiring infrastructure are forwarded to the Council. If approved by the Council, the subdivision plat is filed with the Clerk of Court.

Once a Preliminary Plat for a subdivision requiring infrastructure is approved, the developer has six months to submit engineering plans to the Department. The plans are forwarded to the following departments: Public Works & Wastewater for review of sewer and drainage infrastructure, Waterworks for review of water plans, Contract Monitor for streetlight plans, and Parks & Recreation for review of the recreation land and fee obligations. After those Directors approve the engineering plans, the developer may request Construction Approval from the Planning and Zoning Commission. When the approval is granted, developers generally begin construction of infrastructure immediately. After building the infrastructure and certifying that it meets the Parish's standards, the developer submits a Final Plat and formal documents to dedicate the infrastructure for public use. Once the Parish Council accepts this Final Plat and files it with the Clerk of Courts, the developer is then authorized to sell lots.

In 2010, no major subdivisions received Final Approval.

10-Year Trend

Year	Subdivisions	Lots
2010	0	0
2009	2	53
2008	3	165
2007	6	336
2006	6	487
2005	7	273
2004	3	70
2003	3	216
2002	5	216
2001	6	230
2000	2	100
1999	4	187

2010 Preliminary Plat and Construction Approvals

One (1) major subdivision that received Preliminary Plat approval in 2010. This subdivision was actually a recertification of a Preliminary Plat Approval that was approved in 2009 but expired after 6-months of non-activity.

Subdivisions in Preliminary Plat	Number of Lots
Casa de Killona	20
Total	20

No major subdivisions were approved for construction in 2010.

Minor Subdivisions/Administrative Resubdivisions: Most applications for land partitions result in five or fewer lots and do not require requiring infrastructure improvements. Subdivision Regulations specifies two procedures for completing these Minor Resubdivisions. When a minor subdivision results in a net increase of lots, that request requires Planning Board of Commissions approval and Parish President's signature before filing with the Clerk of Court. The Department refers to these as "minor subdivisions."

When a minor subdivision does not result in a net increase of lots, public hearing before the Commission is not required. Only signatures from the Planning & Zoning Director and the Parish President are required before filing in the Clerk of Courts. These applications are identified as "Administrative Resubdivisions." Such requests typically result in minor adjustments of existing lot lines or result in a net reduction in the number of lots.

Resubdivision	Applications Processed	Lots Created or Modified
Minor	11	21
Administrative	33	44
Total	44	65

Of the 11 cases considered by the Commission, three (3) were denied; two (2) were removed from consideration, either by the applicant or the Commission. One (1) case to approve two (2) lots was approved by the Commission in December and forwarded to the Council in January 2011 for consideration of a waiver to hard-surface frontage.

II. PERMITTING

A. Permits issued: As outlined in the Home Rule Charter, the Department of Planning & Zoning is the regulatory agency responsible for the issuance of building permits and activity permits within St. Charles Parish.

2010 Select Permit Activity with Seven-Year Comparison

Permit Type	2010 Total	2009 Total	2008 Total	2007 Total	2006 Total	2005 Total	2004 Total
New Residential	57	108	100	122	563	309	319
Additions	117	133	172	164	253	226	230
Mobile Homes	50	64	104	58	172	114	89
Commercial	40	14	23	12	25	25	20
Industrial	1	2	1	2	5	2	4
Religious	2	0	0	0	1	1	1
Multi-Family	0	0	0	3	15	8	9
Medical	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Educational	5	3	1	0	0	0	4
Swimming Pools	31	36	37	55	62	41	63
Change of Use	82	112	102	116	135	112	135
Totals	386	472	540	503	1231	838	824

B. Variance Requests: The St. Charles Parish Code of Ordinances states that approval or denial of any permit application shall be based on the compliance with all pertinent regulations. Occasionally, density, spatial or other requirements affect a property adversely, generally because of an irregularity with the property. When enforcement would result in any such unnecessary hardship, the Code stipulates that the property owner may request relief from the Zoning Board of Adjustments (ZBA). The ZBA holds regularly scheduled public meetings to review such requests and decides each case with a majority vote. In 2010 the ZBA considered thirty-six (36) individual cases requesting variances from the following Code requirements:

2010 Variance Requests Presented to the ZBA

Regulations To:	Total	Approved	Denied
Setbacks-Front Yard	1	1	0
Setbacks-Rear Yard	9	8	1
Setbacks-Side Yard	6	5	1
Base Flood Elevation	9	9	0
Minimum Lot Size	2	2	0
Parking/Hard Surface	2	2	0
Driveway Distance to Corner	1	1	0
Fencing & Landscaping	4	4	0

One variance request application was withdrawn by the applicant.

III. CODE ENFORCEMENT

The Department of Planning & Zoning is tasked with enforcing a number of sections of the Parish Code of Ordinances. In order to increase both effectiveness and efficiency within the code enforcement sector of the Department, a geographical district is assigned to each Code Enforcement Officer who responds to all activity within that area. Code Enforcement Officers investigate general nuisance complaints ranging from grass to abandoned automobile concerns and violations. They monitor residential and commercial construction, additions and swimming pool installations as mandated in the Code. In 2010 there were 632 specific code complaints and 865 specific grass complaint incidents reported to the Department and responded to by the Code Enforcement Officers. Other activities are detailed in the chart below:

2010 Code Enforcement Activity

Permits Issued	370
Permits Finaled	115
Active Permits (as of 12/31/10)	90
Total Complaints Received	1497
Code Related	632
Grass Related	865
Complaints Resolved	1256
Complaints Active	241
On-Site Inspections	7550

Demolition Permits issued	37
Derelict vehicles tagged / removed	52
Illegal signs removed	2105
Cases Forwarded to Legal	33
Cases assigned Docket #s	11
Legal Resolved cases	39

IV. COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT

Christmas Trees: The Coastal Zone Management Section completed the 2009/2010 Christmas Tree Project in the Simoneaux Pond Area in Bayou Gauche Area. Approximately 3500 Christmas Trees were collected and placed in the open water to serve as a wake breaker, and to build land and pens were built to handle next years' trees. The project was completed in June of 2010.

The Louisiana Department of Natural Resources decided in 2010 to discontinue the funding for the Christmas Tree Program. St. Charles Parish has decided to fund the additional \$18,000 per year and continue the program. Trees will be collected in January as though nothing has changed.

Coastal Impact Assessment Program (CIAP):

The Lake Pontchartrain Shoreline Protection Project continued this year with the design and engineering work for the 2 projects. Working with LaPlace Consulting Services and Moffat and Nichols, the Pontchartrain Levee District has proceeded to design of the 2 projects and has begun the permitting process. The project should go to bid for the first phase in the first quarter of 2011 and be in construction by the end of summer.

Money left over from the Lake Salvador Project will be rolled over to help fund the Pontchartrain Projects. The West LaBranche Project is fully funded and at least 35% of the East Project is funded. Additional funding is being pursued by the Parish and PLD.

Wetland Watchers' Park:

The first and largest Phase of WWP was completed and dedicated in 2010. The phase consisted of the main pavilion, 6 picnic areas, a fishing pier, benches, a play area and shoreline protection. The walking trail and outdoor classroom, which were paid for by the school board were also completed and open this year. The park is proving very popular and should become more so once the warm weather of 2011 begins.

Bonne Carre' Boat Launch Rehabilitation:

St. Charles Parish received a grant to restore the Bonnet Carre' Boat Launch located between the spans of I-10. Surveying, geotechnical and engineering were nearing completion for new dock and asphalt parking at the end of 2010. The project should be bid and constructed by summer of 2011.

V. OTHER PROJECTS

In addition to the regulated responsibilities the Department of Planning & Zoning collaborates with all departments of parish government as we work together to improve life in St. Charles Parish.

Comprehensive Land Use Plan: “St. Charles 2030 – Bridge to the Future”

The Planning Department has continued analysis and public outreach for the Comprehensive Land Use Plan update in 2010. We have held monthly meetings with our citizen steering committee and have held three separate public outreach events related to the planning effort. The public outreach included two community forums and a session with the Satellite Center. The focus of the forums was to help guide the goal and policy development of the plan and to assist in determining the public priorities for implementation.

The initial draft of the land use plan is expected in early 2011 with the public hearing and adoption process to follow by mid 2011.

South Central Regional Construction Code Council

In conjunction with the new Building Code Plan Review and Inspection contract with South Central Regional Planning, the Planning Department represents St. Charles Parish on this Board which is comprised of all Parishes represented by South Central Planning for compliance with Louisiana State Uniform Construction Codes. This board meets quarterly to discuss any issues that arise regarding compliance with construction codes.

GIS

Staff completed GIS files for the Parish’s zoning and existing land uses in 2009. In 2010, staff began to establish address points in the GIS address and in some cases verified same. The existing land use data will be used by the Comprehensive Land Use consultant team to identify trends and note areas for future growth potential. Files will be updated regularly as changes occur and can be used to make maps for many purposes. Once the addressing phase of the project is completed, parcel verification and updating will commence, likely in mid-2011.